



2014 ANNUAL REPORT



MISSOURI
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

*Katy Trail State Park
2014 Rural Missouri photo contest winner*



Public fireworks display as seen from Long Branch State Park

A Letter from Governor Nixon



Friends,

Missouri State Parks offer outstanding scenery, enriching windows to the past, a nationally recognized trail system and great places to explore. As Governor, I have visited all 87 state parks and historic sites and hiked hundreds of miles on our state's award-winning trails.

To encourage Missourians to enjoy healthy, outdoor activity, the First Lady and I launched the 100 Missouri Miles Challenge in 2013. From cities and suburbs to our small towns and rural areas, Missourians tackled this challenge as an opportunity to get active and healthy, while enjoying the great outdoors. In 2014, we launched the second year of the challenge, and more than 22,000 Missourians completed more than 3 million miles of outdoor activity.

This year, we will be making a significant investment in our water resources and infrastructure. Our state parks offer many opportunities to explore our lakes and rivers, whether you chose to paddle, fish, boat or swim. In many state historic sites, guests have the opportunity to learn about our state's history and how it was shaped by water. I encourage you to join me in taking advantage of Missouri's water resources in our state parks and historic sites.

More great memories are out there, just waiting to be made.

Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon
Governor of Missouri

A Letter from the Director



Friends,

Missouri State Parks has something for every guest to enjoy, and we're proud to consistently be ranked as one of the top four state park systems in the nation. The 87 state parks and historic sites that make up the system provide a wide variety of opportunities to hike, camp, fish, discover the past and simply explore nature. We also protect and preserve the state's most outstanding landscapes and cultural resources.

In 2014, our attendance topped 18 million, and we were excited to welcome the many families who chose to camp with us. We appreciate the strong connection many Missourians have with the outdoors, and we are dedicated to connecting even more youth with the wonders of nature. In 2014, we noted an exciting and positive trend — for the first time, one in four of our campers was under 18. We hope even more young people and families will join us for a night under the stars in 2015, and I would like to personally invite you to camp with us.

In the past year, we also worked to tackle challenges. The resurgence of black bear in Missouri is an exciting wildlife event, but we must also take precautions as the potential of human interactions increase. In Missouri State Parks, we have worked so guests know how to “be bear aware.” The importance of our efforts was highlighted this year when we marked our first black bear damage report in a state park or historic site. A scavenging bear damaged a dumpster and recycling center at Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park. Thanks to our precautions and planning, no one was harmed and immediate action was taken to further inform and educate our guests.

Our successes are thanks to the dedication of our team, which does a great job making sure our guests enjoy their experience. Our state parks consistently earn a 97 percent approval rating from our guests. We appreciate the pride many Missourians feel for their state parks. In 1984, Missourians voted to support state parks and soil conservation with a 1/10th of a cent sales tax. When the sales tax was last renewed at the polls in 2006, more than 71 percent of Missourians voted to renew it. You have my word that we will always respect the trust you have placed in us to operate your state park system.

Remember, “You Are Always Welcome in Missouri State Parks!”

Bill Bryan,
Director, Missouri State Parks

By the Numbers

ATTENDANCE
18.5 million

STAYING CONNECTED

1.6 million visitors
to mostateparks.com

37,000
Facebook followers

4,000
followers on Twitter

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

More than 3,900 volunteers
contributed 237,067 hours

REVENUE
\$9.7 million

SPENDING THE NIGHT

65,358 camping and
park-run lodging reservations

4.1% increase in reservations

5.1% increase in camping occupancy

8% increase in lodging occupancy

26.43% of campers were under 18



EXPERIENCING NATURE AND HISTORY

More than 2 million
interpretive contacts

Nearly 55,000
interpretive programs presented

General Revenue Funds New Projects

During the 2013 legislative session, Missouri State Parks received the first general revenue appropriation since the '90s. State parks and historic site staff have been hard at work putting that funding to good use.

New duplex cabins at Bennett Spring State Park near the spring replace a four-unit cabin that was destroyed by fire.

Picnic shelters at Wakonda State Park and Nathan Boone Homestead State Historic Site were constructed.

Five bridges are being replaced along Katy Trail State Park in Wilton, Providence, Rhineland, Marthasville and Gore.

Two new precast restroom/shower units were installed at Bennett Spring State Park's Campground #5.

A concrete flush restroom was installed at Elephant Rocks State Park. The project included a new wastewater system necessary to accommodate the updated facility.

A new campground is in the planning stages for Montauk State Park. Construction of the 30 full hook-up sites is estimated to start in 2015.

A new entrance road at St. Francois State Park will replace the existing low water crossing and failing road along Coonville Creek. The project is currently in design and should be under way by spring 2015.

At Roaring River State Park, a project is planned to put lodging back into the old Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Lodge at the park. Work will also include a new roof and other miscellaneous repairs to this historic structure.



Bennett Spring State Park - precast restroom / shower unit



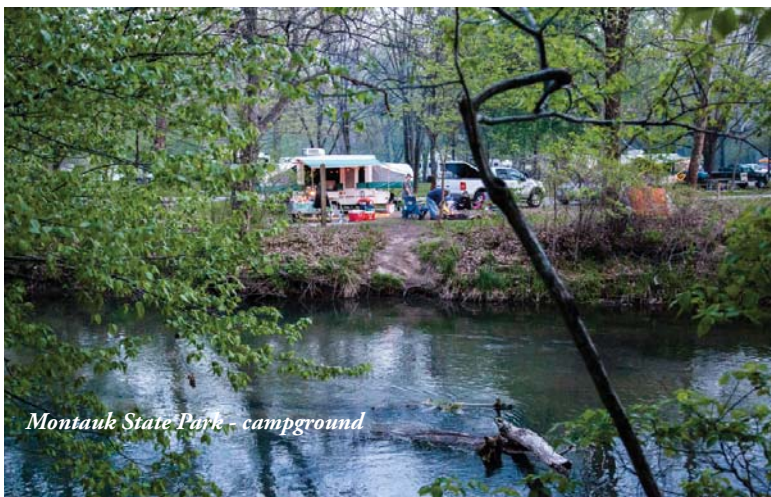
Roaring River State Park - CCC Lodge



Katy Trail State Park - bridge replacement



Bennett Spring State Park - new duplex cabins



Montauk State Park - campground



Elephant Rocks State Park - concrete flush restroom



St. Francois State Park



Wakonda State Park - picnic shelter

We've Been Busy

100 MISSOURI MILES IN MISSOURI STATE PARKS

Missouri State Parks guests were among the more than 22,300 Missourians who completed nearly 3 million miles as a part of the Governor's 100 Missouri Miles Challenge. In 2014, Gov. Jay Nixon and First Lady Georganne Nixon kicked off the second year of the challenge, which celebrates Missouri's award winning trails and encourages Missourians to enjoy the outdoors. The third year of the challenge begins in 2015.

LEARN2

Bringing more families to Missouri state parks to enjoy the outdoors is the goal of the Learn2 programs offered by Missouri State Parks at sites throughout the state.

Tents, stoves, kitchen kits, sleeping pads and other camping equipment were provided for the weekend Learn2 Camp programs through a partnership with The North Face under its "Explore Your Parks" program. During 2014, 79 people participated at Onondaga Cave, St. Francois, Weston Bend and Long Branch state parks.

BEAR AWARE

Bears have long been a symbol of the wilderness qualities that we value. The remarkable sense of smell that leads them to nuts, berries and honey can also lead them to human foods. Camper's coolers, garbage left in the open, and food scraps thrown on the ground or in the fire can draw bears to an easy meal. When bears associate humans with food, they lose their natural fear of humans and leave the safety of the backcountry.

In 2014, Missouri State Parks expanded its efforts to teach guests about the resurgence of black bear in Missouri. We have the opportunity to educate guests now on this exciting natural event. Interpretive bear trunks, a new bear video featuring information and camping tips and special bear-resistant garbage containers are among the actions taken. These efforts make sure our guests are helping to keep Missouri's bears wild and keep visitors safe.

THE BATTLE OF ISLAND MOUND IN FILM

Missouri State Parks has released a new documentary movie that tells the dramatic story of the Battle of Island Mound and explains its importance to Missouri and the rest of the country.

Fought in late October of 1862 in Bates County, some 220 members of the First Kansas Colored Voluntary Infantry, most of which were freed or escaped slaves, marched into Missouri to clear out a band of Southern-sympathizing guerrillas. Although outnumbered, the African-American Union soldiers routed the "bushwhackers," becoming the first blacks to fight under the Union flag in the Civil War. The battle made headlines as far away as New York City.

The Battle of Island Mound State Historic Site was dedicated in 2012, becoming Missouri's newest state park facility. Located amid the soybean fields in a rural area west of Butler, the 40-acre site has a circular trail through the prairie with interpretive panels along the way.

The film was created in collaboration with St. Louis filmmaker Brant Hadfield. It is available for purchase at mostateparks.com/shop.



Learn2Camp



Battle of Island Mound State Historic Site film



Big Lake State Park

BIG LAKE STATE PARK WELCOMES CAMPERS

Missouri State Parks began welcoming campers to Big Lake State Park near Mound City during Memorial Day weekend of 2014. The north-west Missouri park had been closed since a levee breach caused severe flooding and damage to the park in 2011.

The re-opened campground includes 58 electric campsites, 18 basic campsites and one showerhouse. Visitors are also able to enjoy the day-use area, which includes a shelter with capacity for 100 people and boat ramp for recreational use of the oxbow lake for which the park is named. Construction on additional amenities for guests will begin in 2015.

MISSOURI STATE PARKS MANAGES VINEY CREEK RECREATION AREA

Campers and outdoor enthusiasts were able to enjoy the 2014 recreation season at Viney Creek Recreation Area, which is located near Golden on Table Rock Lake.

After being closed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Missouri State Parks re-opened the recreation area. Park staff managed and oversaw the operations of the campground and day-use area on a one-year temporary lease agreement.



Viney Creek Recreation Area

Partnerships Bring Opportunities

BODINE ALUMINUM FISHING DOCK

More anglers will have access to fish at Lake Lincoln at Cuivre River State Park thanks to the new accessible fishing dock dedicated in October. The project was made possible thanks to a generous donation by Toyota Bodine located in Troy, Mo.



STATE PARKS YOUTH CORPS BENEFITS YOUTH AND STATE PARKS

In 2014, the State Parks Youth Corps (SPYC) once again employed young Missourians to work in state parks and historic sites throughout the state. SPYC is a cooperative program between Missouri State Parks and the Missouri Department of Economic Development. Stay tuned for more on the program in the 2014 State Parks Youth Corps Annual Report.

MISSOURI MUDDERS SHELTER

In November, a new special events shelter was dedicated at St. Joe State Park. Missouri State Parks and the Missouri Mudders Enduro partnered to develop the shelter, which will be used for special events at the park. The Missouri Mudders Enduro acquired a \$15,000 donation from the Yamaha Corporation to construct the shelter. The Missouri Mudders donated additional funding, design and labor to complete the project.

WESTON BEND SPOTTING SCOPE

A new spotting scope to allow more guests to enjoy birding opportunities at Weston Bend State Park was dedicated on Oct. 15. The scope was funded by the Platte County Parks & Recreation Outreach Grant Program and commemorates Platte County's 175th Anniversary. Representatives from Wings over Weston, Missouri State Parks and Platte County joined the West Platte Elementary Green Club at the telescope unveiling.

Special Events, Special Opportunities



KATY TRAIL RIDE

The 13th annual Katy Trail Ride was held June 17-21, allowing nearly 300 bicyclists to experience Katy Trail State Park from Clinton to St. Charles. Missouri State Parks and Missouri State Parks Foundation sponsored the scenic five-day ride on the nation's longest developed rail trail.

YEAR OF THE TRAIL

Missouri State Parks made 2014 the Year of the Trail in parks and historic sites. With nearly 1,000 miles of trails to enjoy, guests throughout the state celebrated with us.

Guided hikes, new trail celebrations and other outdoor events helped visitors explore the trail opportunities in Missouri State Parks.

Participants were also able to participate in the new GeoChallenge celebrating the Year of the Trail. Using the mobile app, guests could visit the trailheads on the list and earn points to win prizes.



Missouri State Parks Racing Series

In an effort to engage new user groups and bring more people to Missouri state parks, the Missouri State Parks Racing Series was introduced in 2014. Races included the Finger Lakes Adventure Challenge at Finger Lakes State Park, Rocktober Run at Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park, Haulin Bass 8K and 15K at Stockton State Park, and 5K and 12K Tunnel Trot on the Katy Trail State Park starting at Rocheport. Plans for the 2015 series are under way.



Bringing History Alive

MISSOURI MADE AT ST. LOUIS AIRPORT

This year, Missouri State Parks presented an exhibition titled "Missouri Made" at the Lambert-St. Louis International Airport. The exhibition highlighted the Missouri State Museum's varied and unique collection of Missouri materials and demonstrated a wide range of artistic skills and creativity.

Exploring five themes in five display cases, the objects highlight Missouri offerings from raw materials to manufactured goods to one-of-a-kind crafts. The items were on display for travelers to enjoy from March-June.

PILOT KNOB RE-ENACTMENT

This year marked the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Pilot Knob. The re-enactment at the site drew as many as 48,000 attendees over two days.

In addition to the re-enactment and living history events, the event included a ceremony officially re-naming the site "Battle of Pilot Knob State Historic Site." With this name change, there will be consistency in the naming of our five battle sites. The change also better represents the nature of the historic site, letting guests know that, in addition to being the site of Fort Davidson, the historic site preserves and interprets the entirety of the battle of Pilot Knob.

WILLIAM H. POMMER AT DEUTSCHHEIM

Deutschheim State Historic Site in Hermann celebrated the music and history of musician William H. Pommer on April 4-5. During concerts and a symposium, visitors had the opportunity to experience Pommer's music and learn about his life and works. Pommer was the grandson of Caroline Pommer, who built Deutschheim State Historic Site's Pommer-Gentner House in 1840.

Sponsors for the special event included Missouri State Parks, Hermann Arts Council, the German American Club of Hermann, Dierberg Educational Foundation and the Deutschheim Verein. The event was also made possible thanks to a grant from the Missouri Humanities Council.

Celebrating Milestones

50 YEARS FOR GRAHAM CAVE, WATKINS WOOLEN MILL AND ST. FRANCOIS

This year, three parks celebrated their 50th birthday. St. Francois, Watkins Woolen Mill and Graham Cave state parks all took time in 2014 to mark their 50th anniversary with a special event that focused on the history of the site. These birthday celebrations were a great way to invite the public to celebrate these milestones.

125 YEARS FOR THOMAS HART BENTON

The year 2014 marked Thomas Hart Benton's 125th birthday, and several celebrations were held in his hometown of Kansas City. Much like Benton's unique approach to his art and life, the events to celebrate his birthday were creative, unusual and fun. The celebrations kicked off with an open house at Thomas Hart Benton Home and Studio State Historic Site.

Missouri Made at the Lambert-St. Louis International Airport



Battle of Pilot Knob State Historic Site re-enactment



Protecting Our Resources

ADDRESSING WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME

White-nose syndrome, a fungus that is fatal to bats but does not affect humans, is found throughout the eastern United States and Canada. The name describes a fuzzy white fungus, *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*, which typically appears on the faces and wings of infected bats. This serious wildlife issue was first detected in Missouri in 2010, and bats with the disease were discovered in several Missouri caves by 2014.

Missouri State Parks continues to cooperate with state and federal partners to address the expansion of white-nose syndrome through Missouri, with planning, research and cave use policy. These efforts included co-hosting the national WNS meeting in Missouri, and contracting with the Missouri Cave Research Foundation to conduct biological inventories of state park caves.

NEW STATE CHAMPION SWAMP CHESTNUT OAK IN BIG OAK TREE STATE PARK

Big Oak Tree State Park, near East Prairie, was recognized as home to Missouri's new champion swamp chestnut oak tree. It is now certified as the largest known tree of its species in Missouri by the Missouri Department of Conservation's Forestry Division. Missouri State Parks nominated the tree for certification. The tree has a circumference of 204 inches, a height of 118 feet and a crown spread of 69 ¼ feet.



National Initiatives Provide New Opportunities

Continuing efforts to engage visitors and attract new guests, Missouri State Parks increased efforts to participate in national initiatives. These programs provide the opportunity to show support for our national partners while utilizing resources offered through these programs.

- **FIRST DAY HIKES** – Once again on Jan. 1, families started the year with a healthy hike. In 2014, 570 Missourians hiked a total of 1,537 miles on trails in Missouri State Parks.
- **KIDS TO PARKS** – On May 17, Missouri State Parks held kid-friendly activities to start the summer off right.
- **NATIONAL TRAILS DAY** – On June 7, participants celebrated our award-winning trail system with guided hikes and activities. A total of 24 parks and historic sites participated.
- **THE GREAT AMERICAN BACKYARD CAMPOUT** – On June 28, families, friends and youth groups came together to enjoy a fun and memorable night. More than 1,000 guests participated, which included 547 children.
- **NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY** – Volunteers and park staff worked together to celebrate and improve our public lands.

First Day Hikes - Roaring River State Park



2015 is Going to be Awesome

Missouri State Parks had a great year in 2014. We promoted our award-winning trails, held a variety of successful events, and remained committed to protecting our state's natural and cultural wonders. In 2015, we plan to continue the good work and expand our efforts to make sure our visitors know they are "always welcome in Missouri State Parks."

We encourage you to explore our outstanding water resources in our state parks and historic sites. You can paddle a water trail, explore Missouri's rivers or enjoy a relaxing day on a lake. There really is an opportunity for everyone.

We're excited about the coming year and hope you will join us by taking the opportunity to explore history and get outdoors in 2015. And, just around the corner in 2016, we will begin celebrating the 100th anniversary of the state park system. It's going to be quite the birthday party!

Check out **mostateparks.com** throughout the year to hear about the adventures you can discover in Missouri State Parks.





MISSOURI STATE PARKS

LEGEND FOR MISSOURI REGIONAL MAP

■ KANSAS CITY ■ LAKES ■ SOUTHEAST ■ CENTRAL ■ ST. LOUIS ■ NORTHEAST

